

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2012

**Note:
Special meeting place
and time.
See below.**

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

April Meeting

Field Trip!

UTA College Park Center

**Wednesday, April 11, 6:45 pm
601 S. Pecan St**



ACC is going on the road for the April meeting — an informative tour and talk at the new arena and special events center. Representatives of the UT System and the architectural and engineering firms involved will lead a discussion of green elements in the state-of-the-art building. Bring your neighbors, family, and friends. They'll never again get to view this remarkable structure in such detail and hear experts explain its finer points. Be in the lobby by 6:50. The foot train starts at 7:00.

For those who'd rather not park at UTA, a car pool caravan will leave the Fielder Museum at 6:15.

Bits & Pieces

All Compost All the Time

Ox beetles are widespread, big (over an inch long), and possibly scary. Some males even have three impressive horns. But it's the huge grubs that interest the composters among us: They eat rotting wood and leaves, thus helping the decomposition process. Another reason not to kill every grub we find.



Today's Inspirational Moment



Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush.

Doug Larson

Best Spring Song?

Lots of votes for the beautiful Brown thrasher, which stays here year round but loves dense brush so much that it's more often heard than seen. Dense brush? Sounds like yet another vote for wildscaping.



Local Wisdom



Mandatory water conservation...is economically short sighted....We have a culture built on the use of water. We have built homes with green lawns and beautiful landscaping requiring a great deal of water.

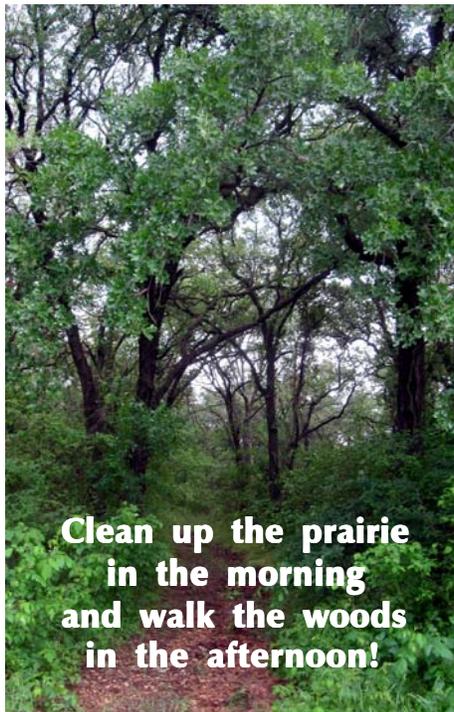
Letter to the S-T editor.

SW Nature Preserve Spring Plant Walk Saturday, April 21, 2 - 4 pm

Join Master Naturalist Jim Varnum and explore spring wonders at Arlington's Southwest Nature Preserve from 2 till 4 pm. We should see plant specialties like adder's tongue, ferns and farkleberries (in bloom, no less!). Spring migration should still be in progress, so bring binoculars if you'd like to catch a glimpse of a vireo or warbler. Always a gem of the north Texas crosstimbers, SWNP's post oak woods, wildflowers and ponds should be looking extra fine this spring.



Adder's tongue



Clean up the prairie in the morning and walk the woods in the afternoon!

Please wear sturdy soled shoes/boots and long pants — and don't forget the sunscreen and water. Bug spray too.

Although there are trails, SWNP is "pre-development" so trails are not improved and there are no water or restroom facilities onsite.

RSVP is appreciated to plan for parking and in case of inclement weather, etc.:

prairie@arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

For map and directions: Search Google Maps for 5201 Bowman Springs Road, Arlington, TX 76017.



Farkleberry

THE POST OAK

Published 10 times a year by the Arlington Conservation Council P.O. Box 216, Arlington TX 76004-0216. www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Jan Miller Photos by Wesley Miller



The luck of the Irish for sure: Last month's St. Patrick's Day workday was a great success! With help from APRD's Jack Wachtendorf and Perry Swim, plus volunteers, lots of brush

was cleared and noxious weeds were removed near the south entrance. Big thanks to Barbara and Edward Fleischman, Josephine and Frank Keeney, Joanna McClellan, Wes Miller, Donna Piercy, Ed Pischedda, Bill Shaw, Jack Thornton, Mary Turner, and John Darling. Let's follow up with another great event this month!

Join us on Saturday, April 21, to celebrate Earth Day weekend — should be the height of the spring blooming season! We'll hope to see you there.



**New York Avenue
Blackland Prairie Park
3rd Saturday workday
Saturday,
April 21, 2012
9 am – noon**

Volunteers needed! APRD employees will be cutting brush and small trees, then applying herbicide. Volunteers are needed to remove the brush as it's cut. There's always an opportunity to pick up litter, too.

Bring your handsaws, loppers and gloves and wear thick-soled boots/shoes and long pants. Also, warmer weather means sunscreen, bug spray and water. Bring your own container; refills will be provided.

Please RSVP: You are essential! We need enough volunteers to assist APRD employees who will be operating the chain saws and applying herbicide. Reply to:
prairie@arlingtonconservationcouncil.org



Prairie Festx3 at Tandy Hills
4 pm - dusk
Saturday, April 28
Saturday, May 26

This year, Prairie Fest at Tandy Hills undergoes a format change: Three events (not just one) and vendors narrowed to a few select food/beverage vendors. Live music goes on, from a totally solar-powered stage. Note: Brave Combo is scheduled to be back in April. Guided wildflower walks are still there, along with new discovery hikes for kids of all ages.

Funds raised during Prairie Festx3 support fieldtrips that bring elementary school kids to the prairie for outdoor learning.

Mark your calendars, and wear your green ACC t-shirt! ACC is a sponsor of PrairieFestx3. For more information, see <http://tandyhills.org/fest>.

Wildscape Update **Molly Hollar**

This year's great Walk on the Wildside for Carrie Donovan's students from Goodman Elementary was super smooth, organized and led by the wildscape's Outreach Leader, Peggy Quinn. Wildscape volunteers carried out all the planned activities: Julia Burgen once again was supreme birding teacher; Callie Mitchell taught composting; Dawn Hancock presided over parts of a flower; Jane Oosterhuis and Glenda Mitchell oversaw the seedball operation;

Josephine Keeney provided butterfly facts; and Joe Martinez had water info and conservation. Assistants and tour guides did a masterful job to make for an exemplary WOW. Our volunteers reported that the students were outstanding, attentive, and eager.

Other happenings include the installation of the giant prickly pear at the water conservation area. Thorny prickly pears are quite tricky to handle, load, transport, and unload, so thanks to extremely

dedicated volunteers Joe Martinez and Bob Poppelreiter the challenge was met (see next page). Jo Poppelreiter, Dawn Hancock, and Kay Sekio, who have adopted this area of the wildscape, oversaw this spiny operation. In addition, they have spent many hours weeding. Thanks to our so badly needed rains, the weeds are trying to take over, so our volunteers are now fighting the weed battle. In spite of the weeds, spring is exploding with blooms.



Above, Callie and Danny teaching compost. Above center, the incomparable Peggy Quinn. Above right, Dawn Hancock's flower parts activity is always a favorite. Below, seedballing with Jane and Glenda is lots of fun for everyone. Below right, Josephine enralls the kids with butterflies.



Wildscape Update continued from page 4



Overcoming all obstacles, Joe Martinez (left) and Bob Poppelreiter put the prickly pear in its place. A perfect fit!

Patriotic Plantings by Andrea Wulf

The first four presidents of the United States – George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison – were all utterly obsessed with manure and recipes for compost. Adams even jumped into a stinking pile when he was America’s first “minister plenipotentiary” to Britain in London in 1786. Teasing apart the straw from the dung (clearly not minding the muck on his hands), he declared with glee that it was “not equal to mine.”

Agriculture would be the foundation of the new republic, they believed. “Cultivators of the earth,” Jefferson wrote, “are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous.” The other founding fathers shared his belief. Agriculture and the independent small-scale farmer were, in their eyes, the building blocks of the new nation. Plowing, planting and vegetable gardening were more than profitable and enjoyable occupations: they were political acts, bringing freedom and independence.

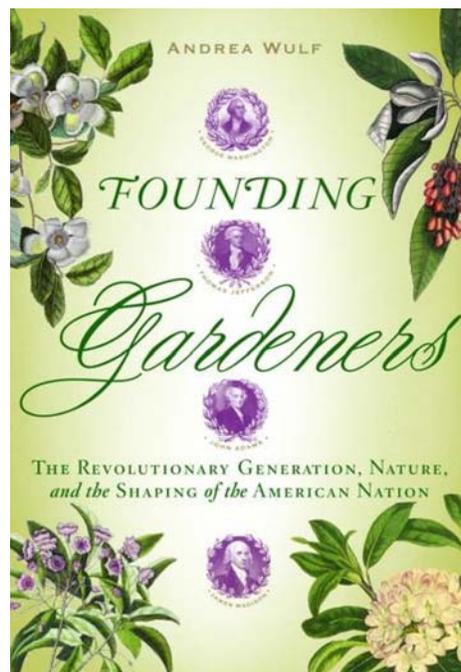
There is a pivotal moment at the beginning of the revolution that sums up their passion. In the summer of 1776, just after the colonists declared indepen-

dence, New York faced 30,000 British troops. As he prepared for the first and largest battle of the Revolutionary War, Washington pondered not only his military strategy but also the voluptuous blossom of rhododendron, the sculptural flowers of mountain laurel and the perfect pink of crab apple. One evening,

just a few days before the battle, he wrote a long letter to [his] estate manager at Mount Vernon [in which] he instructed that these trees and shrubs should be planted in groves next to his house. Even more remarkable than his timing was his choice of plants, for he made it clear that only native species would do. Facing the mighty British army, Washington decided that Mount Vernon was to be an American garden where no English trees would be allowed to claw their roots into the soil. It was his horticultural Declaration of Independence.

After the War of Independence, nature also became a unifying force. It was nature that provided a transcendent feeling of nationhood. America’s endless horizons, fertile soil and floral abundance became the perfect articulation of a distinct national identity – of a country that was young and strong.

Into their speeches, their letters and their diaries, the founders brought metaphors drawn from the natural world. They saw in America’s rugged wilderness a transcendent symbol of a unique New World nation. America’s most revered



continued on page 6

Patriotic Plantings continued from page 5

patriotic songs revel in images drawn from nature: the “amber waves of grain, / For purple mountain majesties / Above the fruited plain” in America the Beautiful; “From the mountains, to the prairies, / To the oceans, white with foam” in God Bless America.

Maybe most extraordinary – given the current miserable state of America’s efforts to curb emissions and its failure to ratify international climate treaties – is that the birth of the environmental movement in this country can also be traced back to the Founding Fathers. In an 1818 speech, Madison said the protection of the environment was essential for the survival of the United States. He condemned Virginians for their ruthless exploitation of the soil and

the destruction of the forests, and he talked about the “balance of nature.” Man had to give back to nature what he took from it: “Vegetable matter which springs from the earth,” he said, must “return to the earth.” [These were] radical views at a time when most still believed that God had created plants and animals entirely for the use of humankind.

Gardening . . . can empower people and local communities. The rise of urban farming and gardening across the country in the past decade and the increasing interest in local produce are examples of Americans’ [wish for] control over their food and its production, which for the most part are in the hands of industry and huge conglomerates.

Over the years, the founders have been invoked by almost every politician and every political movement across a wide spectrum. Now it’s time for the gardeners and environmentalists, who are already following in the footsteps of the Founding Gardeners, to claim their stake in the ideals and the heroes that formed the nation.

Excerpted from writings by and interviews with the author of Founding Gardeners. Compiled by Grace Darling

Andrea Wulf’s book, Founding Gardeners – The Revolutionary Generation, Nature and the Shaping of the American Nation, is published by Knopf.

UTA Advances to “Environmental Eight” in Contest Asha Sharma

UTA advanced in the national March Madness environmental tournament for universities, gaining the title as one of the “Environmental Eight” on Monday.

Sustainability director Meghna Tare said UTA made it this far based on high-quality student submissions about sustainability by faculty and students. UTA beat out big name schools, such as Duke and Cornell University to secure its spot in the top eight.

“It was all based on what we submitted. We submitted around five essays, 25 photos and four videos,” Tare said.

Enviance Inc. and *Environmental Leader* (*The EL Daily*) sponsor the tournament, where a panel of judges with environmental expertise evaluate schools’ environmental studies programs.

Enviance Inc. provides Environmental ERP software, which allows businesses to compile, manage and report environmental data to governmental agencies and corporations. *The EL Daily* reports environmental and sustainability news that particularly pertains to corporations.

The “Environmental Eight” will advance to the next round of the tournament and could gain the title of “Final Four.” From there, judges will decide the “National Champion.” As previously reported, the sustainability office of the winning university will receive \$5,000, and Enviance will sponsor the department chairperson to attend and lead discussions at the Enviance User Conference in San Diego.

Tare said the results help UTA gain national recognition.

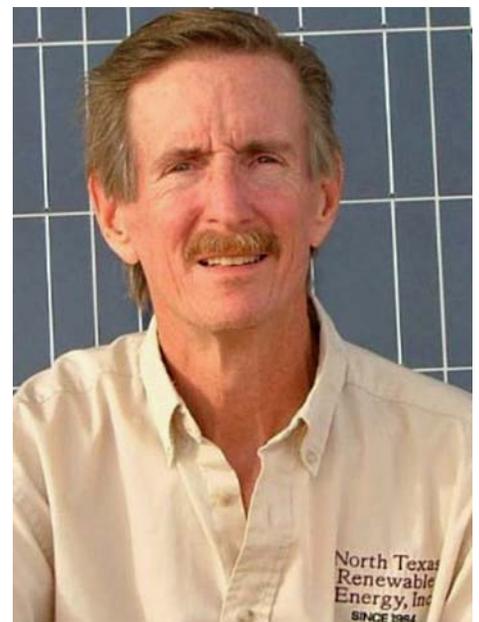
“This is really exciting because this puts UTA on the national map and gets the word out about all its sustainable efforts, programs and initiatives,” Tare said. “People will start recognizing our efforts.”

Judges will announce the Final Four this Friday, and the champion of the tournament will be named April 2.

From the *UTA Shorthorn*, March 26, 2012.

Thanks to Last Month’s Speaker

We’re indebted to Jim Duncan, founder of North Texas Renewable Energy, Inc. for his talk on photovoltaics, which covered everything you’d need to know to make smart choices in solar energy. Also, Jim answered at least a million questions with patience and expertise.



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Wednesday, April 11
6:45 pm

Field Trip to
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